

Working towards the breakthrough

Biomedical research requires serious funding. But it is expensive: one medium-sized clinical trial can cost £300,000, while a major program of research can last 5 years and cost £1 to 2 million. So, big money is needed to unravel the causes and find cures for ME/CFS.

Our priority is to support innovative clinical and biomedical studies, based in established research institutions, investigating the causes of ME/CFS and the effectiveness of potential treatments. All our grants are competitive and are subject to peer review, being rigorously assessed prior to award and subsequent to completion.



To continue building on our success, we have a range of new initiatives we would like to fund, as we are keen to expand our range of biomedical research projects to include centres of research excellence around the globe. Your pledge, together with those of our other generous supporters and sponsors, to give a regular donation each month can help us to commit to new projects and see them through to completion. You are our best hope of making the medical and scientific breakthrough in ME/CFS we all want to see.

How to help us make the breakthrough



- ① Decide how much you would like to give every month, and fill in the panel below.
- ② Fill in your name, address and other contact details.
- ③ By ticking the Gift Aid box you can increase the value of your gift at no extra cost to you.
- ④ Complete the Standing Order instructions below to your Bank or Building Society. Then send this form to: **The Administrator, ME Research UK, The Gateway, North Methven Street, Perth PH1 5PP, UK**
(Tel: 01738 451234, N'j aatc > c\ntb] g D 'j ntj nt0 _J ntli dltaj i ' j)N> +. 14/-

- ① I would like to make a regular gift of £ _____ a month (enter your preferred amount)
- I want to make a one-off donation of £ _____

- ② Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss (delete as appropriate)

Name _____

Address _____

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- ③ I would like to make this and any future donations to ME Research UK, and all payments I have made to ME Research UK in this and the previous 4 financial years, qualify for Gift Aid until I notify you otherwise. (Gift Aid allows us to reclaim the tax that you have already paid on your gifts at no extra cost to you. You must pay an amount of income or capital gains tax equal to the tax we reclaim on your donations in that financial year.)

④ Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Standing Order

To The Manager _____ Bank/Building Society

Address _____

Postcode _____ Preferred monthly payment date _____

Name(s) of account holder(s) _____

Branch Sort Code _____ Account Number _____

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please arrange to debit my/our account with the sum of £ _____ on the _____ day of each month, until further notice. Starting on _____.

Pay to: Clydesdale Bank, 23 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5PQ, UK.

Account: ME Research UK, Account number: 50419466, Branch code: 82-67-09.

Signature(s) _____ Date _____

ME Research UK – Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. SC036942



Help us make the breakthrough



What is ME?

Myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) is a potentially chronic illness characterised by profound, generalised post-exertional loss of muscle power (fatigability); muscle pain that may include tenderness and swelling; and a range of neurological or cognitive symptoms. Patients are also prone to relapses which may take the form of recurrences of the original systemic illness, or fresh episodes of muscular or other symptoms. Unlike the “tiredness” experienced by healthy people, the fatigue which is experienced by ME patients happens after quite moderate exercise, and is often delayed for hours or days. The World Health Organisation lists ME as a disorder of the nervous system (G93.3, ICD 10th revision 2007).

What is the cause?

The cause of ME is still unknown, but there is unlikely to be a single causative agent. Several past epidemics appear to have been triggered by an outbreak of an infection which then subsided, and still today many patients report an infectious onset to their illness. However, some people report a variety of contributing factors (including infectious, traumatic, environmental, etc.), all of which can lead to a condition which shares a set of common symptoms.

Why use the term ME/CFS?

During the 1990s, the term Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) came into use. As there was no specific diagnostic test for ME, and since post-exercise fatigue was one of its prominent symptoms, people with ME began to be diagnosed with CFS. It is increasingly recognised, however, that the diagnosis CFS is so wide-ranging that it can contain a variety of patients with different illnesses. Until this unsatisfactory situation is resolved, and CFS “unpacked” so that specific patient groups (including those with ME) can get the specialised treatment they need, the term ME/CFS is used by charities and healthcare professionals alike.

A report to the Chief Medical Officer of England in 2002 stated that ME/CFS “is a genuine illness and imposes a substantial burden on the health of the UK population. Improvement of health and social care for people affected by the condition is an urgent challenge.”

Living with ME/CFS

The evidence across many studies is that between 120,000 and 240,000 people in the UK have ME/CFS, a prevalence higher than HIV infection or multiple sclerosis. It is twice as commonly reported in women as men. Studies indicate that most people with ME/CFS are unable to work to full capacity, and that a significant number (from 10 to 25%) are effectively house or bed-bound. Despite early reports about “Yuppie Flu”, it is now known that ME/CFS affects all social groups and all ages, including children. The course of the illness can be extremely variable; some people improve quite quickly, while many others develop stable chronic illness or experience a severe and debilitating downward course over many years.



“ME is a substantial medical and social problem, yet relatively little biomedical research has been conducted into its causes and consequences — we need to change this.”

Dr Vance Spence, Chairman of ME Research UK

Help us make the breakthrough in ME/CFS

The primary aim of ME Research UK is to fund biomedical research into ME/CFS, to find its cause, to develop effective treatments and ultimately to discover a cure. In 10 years, we have funded 29 specific research projects in the UK and overseas — more than any other single organisation in the world outside the American continent. Some of the funded projects are shown below, and full details of these and other projects, including the resulting scientific papers, can be found at the research pages of our website: www.mereseearch.org.uk.

Evaluation of pain and therapeutic interventions

Dr Lorna Paul, School of Health and Social Care, Glasgow Caledonian University

Autonomic nervous system dysfunction – a clinical study

Prof. Julia Newton, School of Clinical Medical Sciences, University of Newcastle
(with co-funding from the John Richardson Research Group and the Irish ME Trust)

Exercise, pain, and the immune and sensory systems

Dr Jo Nijs, Department of Human Physiology, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussels, Belgium

Gene expression studies

Dr Jonathan Kerr, St George’s Hospital, University of London
(with co-funding from the Irish ME Trust)

Vitamin D supplementation and cardiovascular disease risk

Dr Faisal Khan, Institute of Cardiovascular Research, University of Dundee

Interleukin-6 and its receptors

Prof. Myra Nimmo, Department of Applied Physiology, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

Muscle bioenergetic abnormalities

Prof. David Jones and colleagues, Institute of Cellular Medicine, University of Newcastle

Exercise tolerance and post-exertional symptoms

Prof. Brian MacIntosh and Dr Eleanor Stein, University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada

XMRV in Swedish patients

Prof. Jonas Blomberg, Uppsala University Hospital, Sweden
(with co-funding from Irish ME Trust)

Chronic inflammation and apoptosis (programme)

Prof. Jill Belch and colleagues, Institute of Cardiovascular Research, University of Dundee

